

18 JUNE 1975

Col. Robert D. Heintz Jr.

The Mauling Of The CIA

WASHINGTON — Is the CIA being "McCarthy-ized" by the left, using the same tactics as those of the late Sen. Joe McCarthy, who two decades ago all but gutted the U.S. Foreign Service from the far right?

This is the question increasingly asked among Washington observers who today see the CIA — not to mention the other intelligence services such as code-breaking National Security Agency NSA or Defense Intelligence Agency DIA — being mauled by low blows, exposed for exposure's sake and, as top officials of all agencies privately admit, chilled into cautious inactivity at a time when stakes in the world game have never been higher and the United States has never been more exposed.

THE CRY OF McCARTHYISM from the left takes on special point as liberal-left Democratic members of the House Select Committee on Intelligence last week sought to depose their chairman, Rep. Lucien Nedzi D.-Mich., himself a respected liberal, for not having exposed long-past CIA abuses to which he earlier became privy as chairman of a House Armed Services subcommittee on intelligence.

(McCarthyism: the political practice of publicizing accusations of alleged wrongdoing without regard to evidence, in order to suppress opposition or institutions.)

Nedzi, who ironically is regarded by the CIA as a tough and uncompromising congressional watchdog, now takes the position, as he has often in the past, that his function as head of the only standing House of Representatives intelligence-oversight panel is to monitor and, where necessary, correct current performance by the CIA rather than muckrake long-past abuses in no danger of being repeated.

But the attempt to purge Nedzi — and incidentally to defenestrate yet another Democratic committee chairman — is only one battle in what the intelligence services and their "consumers" in the White House, State and Defense increasingly perceive as a witchhunt intended by merciless exposure to immobilize if not cripple the government's "third arm" in the conduct of relations with what the Supreme Court once called "the vast external realm abroad."

THE FORCES aligned against the CIA comprise a loose coalition of the doctrinaire left, anti-establishmentarian politicians and writers, segments of the media, disgruntled or publicity-seeking CIA alumni, and — no doubt — deep in the shadows, CIA's implacable rival, Russia's Committee on State Security, better known as the KGB.

Expressing doubt, however, that any central anti-CIA conspiracy exists, or that the elite agency's ordeal results from KGB manipulation, Director of Central Intelligence William Colby told a reporter, "The KGB would have to run to keep up with developments happening now."

Conspiracy or not, however, ever since New York Times reporter Seymour Hersh last December charged — and failed to establish — that there was "massive" and "illegal" CIA "spying" on more than 10,000 Americans, the agency has come under a drumfire of accusation and, worse from the CIA standpoint, unsparing and reckless exposure of hitherto closely guarded national secrets.

Besides The Times' anti-CIA crusade, which in turn sparked high-level, high-visibility investigations by the White House chaired by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller and probes by both houses of Congress, the agency was given a rough ride on May 30 in a 60-minute ABC-TV special "Close-Up: the CIA", which some viewers found to be an intelligence version of the mauling handed the Armed Services in CBS-TV's bitterly controversial "Selling of the Pentagon."

"Bill Colby should get equal time to reply from ABC after that one," said one retired CIA executive, who pointed out what the agency has since officially placed on record, that one of the principal asserted ex-CIA agents used in the ABC show, Frank Sturgis, had never been connected with the agency.

IN ADDITION to widespread media and liberal or left-wing flak, the CIA has been suffering from serious internal bleeding ever since U.S. District Judge Albert V. BRYAN last year declined to enforce the supposedly inviolable CIA secrecy oath against ex-special assistant to the Director of CIA, Victor Marchetti, whose sensational book, "The Cult of Intelligence", was published, showing in boldface more than 200 highly classified disclosures the CIA had gone to court to prevent.

One piece of good news for the agency came last month when the Supreme Court, by an 8-1 vote, sustained the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals in its sharp reversal of Judge Bryan's crippling anti-CIA decision, with the result that agency judgments on disclosure of secrets are once again binding and enforceable.

Even worse than the Marchetti expose, however, is another recent book, "Inside the Company: CIA Diary", published in England by Phillip Agee, the one ex-CIA agent whom senior officials will expressly characterize as a defector.

Agee, who admits in his book his relationship with the Cuban Communist Party, is known to have made at least five trips to Cuba under official sponsorship. He is scheduled to conduct a briefing here in Washington this week under the aegis of Rep. Ronald Dellums, D.-Cal., who has invited fellow members of the House of Representatives to attend and who is one of the House Intelligence Committee members seeking to depose Rep. Nedzi as chairman.

BESIDES the high-visibility charges leveled at the CIA of having planned assassinations, of undermining governments in Chile and elsewhere, of conducting "massive" domestic espionage, and of exploiting other government agencies for intelligence cover, the intense investigative focus on every aspect of U.S. intelligence operations is unavoidably disclosing a mass of less conspicuous information, which is nonetheless of enormous aggregate value to the cross-town rival team in Moscow.

But the worst danger in this congressional and media exposure, as seen by director Colby, is the chill it inevitably places in hitherto fruitful and top-secret relationships between the CIA and other friendly foreign intelligence services. "Will you be passing our stuff over to Congress?" is the most insistent and concerned question Colby says he gets from abroad.

It is still impossible to assess the full damage to the CIA's usefulness likely to result from its present battering.

Colby, who says he has to be an optimist to hold his present job, points out, surprisingly, that CIA job-applications — of good quality, he says — are up. Where less than a thousand initial applications could have been expected last January, the month after the initial Hersh attacks in the New York Times, the CIA actually got 1,700.

continued

Not anything like 1,700 will be hired, especially with appropriations getting tighter and tighter. The agency, reported to have some 15,000 employes and an annual budget of about \$750 million, has in fact been losing money, in terms of constant, non-inflated dollars, ever since 1969, even though — as in the case of the defense budget — dollar amounts have risen each year.

MOST OF THE MONEY, according to Colby, goes into big technical systems presumably, though he did not mention it, like the SS Glomar Explorer, which is credited with raising parts of a Russian nuclear submarine from the Pacific floor, and into hiring top-quality people. No little expenditure, he adds, goes into academic-type research and analysis by top experts of vast amounts of open-source unclassified information readily obtainable.

But Mr. Colby makes no effort to minimize concern over what has been happening to the CIA in the past month's torrent of exposure. "The agency," he said, "should be like a pail — open only at the top. If there's a leak or a hole in the bottom, you end up with no water and no pail."